THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) and (b) The Government of Andhra Pradesh had submitted a memorandum seeking assistance of Rs. 996.12 crores from National Calamity Contingency Fund (NCCF) and 15 lakh MTs of foodgrains for relief employment for the drought declared this year. An Inter-Ministerial Central Team visited the State from 3rd to 7th November, 2003 for an on-the-spot assessment of the situation. This will now be considered by the High Level Committee (HLC), headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, for a decision on the quantum of assistance to be provided to the State in the wake of drought. Meanwhile, one lakh MTs of foodgrains for relief employment and entire Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 2003-04 amounting to Rs. 171.96 crores for undertaking immediate relief measures have been provided to the State.

Promotion of organic farming

344. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have formulated a national project on organic farming with an outlay of Rs. 99.58 crore to improve the soil health;

(b) whether the project envisages the setting up of National Institute of Organic Farming (NIOF) for the production, promotion, market development and regulation of organic farming in the country; and

(c) if so, the details of the proposed scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) and (b) A new Scheme on 'National Project on Organic Farming' with an outlay of Rs. 99.58 crores for implementation during Tenth Plan period has been formulated. The project envisages setting up of 'National Institute of Organic Farming (NIOF)' for the production, promotion, market development and regulation of organic farming in the country.

(c) The main components of the project are as under:-

(i) Setting up of National Institute of Organic Farming;

(ii) Capacity building for promotion of organic farming;

(iii) Support to commercial production (compost) units;

(iv) Training programme and field demonstrations;

(v) Market development and promotion.

Agriculture Research and Education Centres

345. SHRI SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 1343, given in the Rajya Sabha on the 1st August, 2003 and state:

(a) the details of basic infrastructure provided by the agriculture research and education centres; and

(b) the steps taken by Government to upgrade these research centres?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Basic infrastructure is not provided by the Agriculture Research and Education Centres to any other unit.

(b) To upgrade these research centres, support is provided mainly through Plan and Non-Plan grants for infrastructure and scientific and technical inputs.

Insurance cover for yield and price fluctuations

346. SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to introduce a new insurance cover for yield and price fluctuations for farmers under a single policy;

(b) if so, the details of the scheme; and

(c) by when it is likely to be put in operation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. In order to cover the two critical components of a farmer's income, namely yield and price through a single insurance scheme, the Government of India proposes to implement a Pilot Project on Farm Income Insurance Scheme